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Forest Service Completes Fuel Reduction Work at Le Fevre Overlook

FREDONIA, Ariz. – The North Kaibab Ranger District of the Kaibab National Forest recently completed a fuel reduction project at Le Fevre Overlook, a popular scenic viewpoint on Highway 89A offering spectacular views of Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

The Le Fevre Overlook area was one of the sites within the larger Plateau Facilities Fire Protection Project to receive manual and mechanical fuel reduction treatments. The treatment area around the overlook was 12 acres in size. Fuel reduction work focused on reducing tree and plant densities and improving fire resistance.

The fuel reduction treatments at Le Fevre were implemented from late February through mid-March. Fire personnel used a combination of manual and mechanical methods to accomplish the work, with the majority being completed using the district's new rubber skid-steer outfitted with a hydraulic-powered mastication head.

Before treatment, the area had about 200 trees per acre in a very dense and stagnant condition. This was reduced to a much more desirable 78 trees per acre. The most sizeable decrease in vegetation was in the understory cliffrose and pinyon-juniper with an average of 62 plants and small trees per acre post-treatment compared with 443 plants per acre pre-treatment.

Initial post-treatment monitoring results indicate that the pinyon-juniper ecosystem at the project site is moving toward desired conditions at an accelerated pace.

“This project is an ongoing effort to provide safety for everyone that uses Le Fevre,” said North Kaibab District Ranger Randall Walker. “This is just the start to our Plateau Facilities Fire Protection Project.”

The larger project area covers 33 structures or facilities located on 24 different sites on the North Kaibab Ranger District. The main purpose of the project is to protect facilities from wildfires by thinning areas adjacent to them.